



SENIOR ACCESS OFFICER (REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS)

**THE ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT**

LONDON'S EVENING UNIVERSITY

WELCOME

Many thanks for your interest in the role of Senior Access Officer (Refugees and Asylum Seekers). This opportunity comes at an exciting point in Birkbeck's history, as we approach our 200th anniversary in 2023.

We have always occupied a unique niche in the UK Higher Education landscape. Founded to make university education accessible to all working Londoners, Birkbeck has been constantly reinvented and renewed in the face of demographic and policy change. As we approach 2023, we will not only be celebrating this history, but also seeking to put the institution on a new footing through a major programme of capital investment to support an ambitious estates strategy.

Part of the University of London federation, we are proud of our credentials as a research intensive institution which hosted luminaries such as Rosalind Franklin and Eric Hobsbawm. Located at the heart of Bloomsbury, our academic community has always been committed to impact, not only seeking to understand but also to change the world it inhabits. Investment in our research infrastructure, enabling us to build on our existing strengths and develop new areas of excellence, is a further key objective as we approach 2023.

Our unique teaching model, centred on face-to-face evening teaching, with students able to study at a pace of their choice, has enabled us to grow in spite of a succession of external challenges, most notably the national decline in part-time and mature student numbers following changes in funding and student finance since 2008.

A series of innovations, most notably our three-year UCAS entry routes through our evening undergraduate degrees, and our comprehensive range of access routes, have enabled us to reach out to a broader spectrum of students than ever before, whilst we remain one of the major providers of academic and professional

postgraduate qualifications in London and in the UK. A further focus of attention is the student experience, where we aim to improve our excellent performances in the National Student Survey (where we have regularly been the highest ranked multi-Faculty institution in London), and in graduate employability.

These ambitious goals come at a time of unprecedented change in the wider HE policy environment. Following a major restructuring in 2009–2010, the College has undergone a period of rapid growth and robust financial performance. Our proven ability to manage our way through external challenges and internal changes, allied to our strong current position, mean that our strategic discussions about the future are focussed on the development of new subject areas and new modes of delivery.

Birkbeck has always had a national role as an advocate of widening access, lifelong learning and part-time and mature students; we will continue to argue this case, ensuring that new initiatives such as the Teaching Excellence Framework reflect the complexity and multivalency of a diverse and inclusive student community. Recently announced policy developments around degree apprenticeships and around postgraduate and part-time student finance give us the opportunity to further refresh and renew our offer.

All of the Birkbeck community have a role to play both in contributing to the development of these strategic ambitions, and in delivering them.

Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck

ABOUT BIRKBECK



In 1823 George Birkbeck founded the London Mechanics' Institute, an avowedly radical institution with a vision for opening up university education to working Londoners. By 1920 Birkbeck was incorporated in to the University of London and today, almost 200 years later, George's mission, 'to ensure the universal dissemination of the blessings of knowledge', remains undimmed.

Birkbeck, University of London, is a world-class research and teaching institution, a vibrant centre of academic engagement and excellence and London's only specialist provider of evening higher education. Where once we were known solely for our part-time courses and mature students, today we have a wider mix. Of our current cohort of new undergraduates, over half are of BAME background, and over a third qualify for the College's generous package of financial support for students from lower income backgrounds; students range from school leavers to retired learners, but the largest group consists of working Londoners in their 20s and 30s. Undergraduate students study in the evening for a degree at a pace that suits them, across three, four or six years, with major recent growth coming via the three-year UCAS entry route, which has grown from zero to over 3000 students in the past six years. We are also a major provider of academic and professional postgraduate education, with the 6th largest cohort of home and EU postgraduate students in the UK. Our Master's courses are taught predominantly in the evenings, with one, two and in some areas three-year pathways, and flexible payment options. We have 13,000 students studying for over 40 Certificates of Higher Education, six Foundation Degrees nearly 80 BA/BSc/LLB degrees and over 150 Master's degrees in Arts; Business, Economics and Informatics; Law; Science; Social Sciences, History and Philosophy.

But while Birkbeck has its roots firmly in London, we are recognised on a global stage. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University rankings 2018 placed Birkbeck among the world's top 350 universities overall, and ranked us the 84th most

international university, taking in to account both the international students and international academic collaborations. Philosophy and English at Birkbeck are ranked in the world's top 100 according to the QS University World Rankings for 2018, whilst History, Psychology and Law at Birkbeck are all ranked in the world's top 150.

Birkbeck's reputation as a world-class research intensive institution was cemented by the Research Assessment Framework in 2014. Birkbeck was 30th in the UK for research, with 73% of our research rated 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'. We are home to 44 research and specialist institutes and among the awards our research has won in recent years is the Queen's Anniversary Prize for excellence in higher education at the Centre for Brain Function and Development.

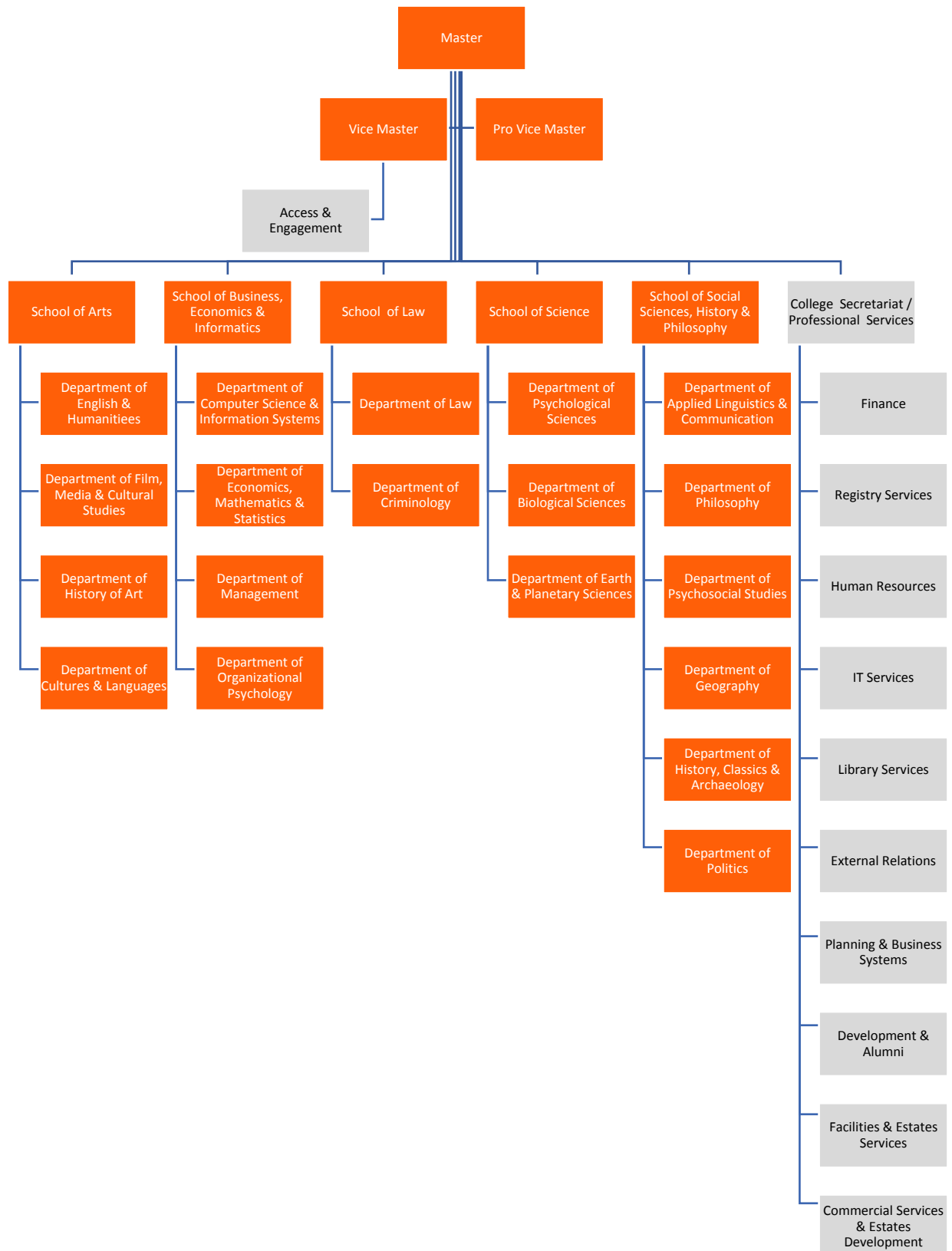
This unique combination of ground-breaking research and innovative teaching provides an inspirational learning experience for our students; we have consistently ranked in the top 5 in London for teaching and student satisfaction in the National Student Survey.

Birkbeck's main Bloomsbury campus is in the heart of academic London, home to a number of other universities and colleges of the University of London, including University College London and the School of Oriental and African Studies. We are situated among beautiful, leafy squares in one of the world's greatest concentrations of libraries, including the British Library and Senate House Library. Across the city in east London, we offer courses at University Square in Stratford. Both our campuses are well-served by public transport.

BIRKBECK

ORGANISATIONAL

STRUCTURE



ABOUT THE ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

The Access and Engagement department sits at the heart of Birkbeck's commitment to improving the access and success of non-traditional students in London. Our innovative and award-winning provision is designed to target potential students who would otherwise feel precluded from taking a step into higher education.

Widening Access to higher education is a strategic priority for the UK government and Birkbeck. Our work addresses the discrepancies in the take-up of higher education opportunities between different social groups. Birkbeck's history and unique provision offers opportunities to a range of students who might not otherwise be able to engage with higher study and its benefits.

The department works with academics and professional services across the College to raise aspirations and educational attainment among prospective students from under-represented groups and enable them to progress into higher education and study a course relevant to their interests, ambitions and goals. We aim to:

- prepare them for higher education life and study;
- ensure success on their programme of study;
- offer access to opportunities outside of the classroom;
- improve their employment prospects;
- provide them with opportunities to return to learning throughout their lives.

The strategic strands which sit within Access and Engagement focus on a core group of non-traditional students who have been recognised by the College as important. These include but are not limited to:

- First in their family to attend university;
- Hold non-traditional entry route qualifications and/or have limited or poor prior attainment (e.g. poor GCSE results or nothing higher than GCSE);
- Have attended a London Further Education College;
- From a low income household (<£25k);
- Belong to an under-represented minority ethnic group;
- Are a mature learner (over 21 years old);
- Classified as disabled;
- Have been out of formal education for more than five years.

About The Compass Project

The Compass Project is an award-winning, sector leading area of work established to transform the lives of asylum seekers (forced migrants) that are excluded from accessing higher education and the short and long term benefits it provides. Based within the Access and Engagement department, it was established in 2017 with financial and strategic support from Birkbeck, external partners and foundations and has generated a mass following of committed colleagues across the institution. It is an innovative and unique project which equips and support forced migrants to access further learning and career opportunities, within a fully supportive and positive environment designed to encourage success and reignited passions around higher learning.

At the heart of this project is Birkbeck's commitment of 20 full scholarships to asylum seekers on Birkbeck's under-graduate and post-graduate certificate programme (120 credits) – offering students a risk free, flexible university learning opportunity for those who might not otherwise be able to. Over the last 2 years this provision has provided a stepping stone to other university 'sanctuary scholarships', new careers and volunteering opportunities.

We have worked with over 350 individuals; welcomed over 150 onto campus and to date have had 35 students from 15 countries, studying with us. Our ambition is to now move the project forward both within the institution but also across the sector - highlighting the value and worth of

institutions committing to this work. We want to see more Compass Project students progress onto long-term study and work opportunities through strategically embedding our extensive partnerships and develop further collaborative approaches to this work, whilst also opening up our pre-and post-entry activities to refugee groups.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:

Senior Access Officer (Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

School or Department:

The Access and Engagement Department

Reports to:

Director of Access & Engagement

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

We are seeking a passionate advocate of the needs and difficulties facing forced migrants. You will have the ideas, innovative approach and can-do attitude that will enhance the Department's ethos and provision to promote the wider benefits of learning to this unique Birkbeck audience. You will have an understanding of the needs and challenges facing this community when considering learning opportunities, mainly Home Office regulations and personal barriers individuals and their family's face, which also prevent them from participating in study.

You will know how to develop and deliver community outreach programme work and engage with local groups and services. You will also need to have the ability to encourage and support others from across the institution to participate in pre and post entry activities for forced migrants.

This will be achieved through:

- extensive community partnership development and collaboration
- development and delivery of suite of activities targeting these communities, building the interest, skills and confidence of this target audience in order to be participants and beneficiaries of university based learning experiences.
- engagement with Birkbeck academic and professional staff to offer enhanced

support and expertise such as mentoring, advice and support

- physical and online material development
- building of strategic partnerships with sector leading organisations and other universities.

Given the nature of this programme, you will have solid experience of working with vulnerable migrant communities. You will have experience of conducting community outreach work and be able to instigate new partnerships, as well as nurture existing ones, in order to deliver long and short term activities which will be accessible and relevant to these communities.

The ability to create and cultivate good working relationships is essential to the role as are skills related to helping persuade and influence enthusiasm for new ideas across both in the community and Birkbeck. Academic and Professional Services are enthusiastic to support this work; their good will and efforts will need co-ordinating and be impactful.

Being a member of a highly responsive and innovative department you are flexible in your approach and passionate about vulnerable groups. You are dedicated to ensuring that all participants receive the best possible experience in a learning environment, and you are able to communicate ideas and content to challenging groups to ensure positive outcomes.

MAIN DUTIES

Working closely with the rest of the Access and Engagement department, the job holder's key responsibilities will include:

Outreach and community liaison:

- Work to build long-term relationships with key staff in relevant local organisations, including community groups, local authorities, schools, colleges, to build awareness of the project, develop progression and further educational opportunities.

- In collaboration with the Access and Engagement department, design and implement a year-round series of activities, both pre and post entry, to support and encourage forced migrant communities into learning and development opportunities. These will be in the communities you are working within, our Bloomsbury and Stratford campuses.
- Evaluate the impact of interventions, maintain accurate records and provide reports to the College and or external funders.
- Working in partnership with other HEIs in order to develop progression opportunities for Compass Project students.
- Represent the institutions and The Compass Project at sector related conferences and events in order to share expertise and showcase the project.
- Support and work with other members of the department to deliver cross team activities as required.
- To stay abreast of developments and issues regarding widening access and communicate and disseminate this information to the team, wider College and external partners.
- Support the suitable and relevant contribution of external supporters (such as corporate partners) to the project, such as talks, discussions and 1:1 guidance.

Student Support:

- Provide a point-of-contact service to new and existing Compass Project students and be a voice on their behalf to resolve issues, sign post and offer advice – both internally and externally.
- Co-ordinate the successful personal tutoring scheme, pairing academic staff with new asylum seeker students to ensure smooth transition and success whilst studying.
- Work with the Team Birkbeck student ambassador scheme, to develop and deliver ‘buddying’ activities with participants on the project

- Provide support and practical advice to existing Compass Project students in maintaining their peer-to-peer network
- Liaise with Student Services and admissions staff to ensure academic decisions are fully informed and support provision for is in place for incoming students.

Internal collaboration:

- In collaboration with academic stakeholders, develop and deliver pre – entry activities and a ‘start of term’ induction programme for the incoming students through collaboration with academic and professional services.
- Work closely with colleges within Development and Alumni to identify new funding opportunities, provide reports and data to existing ones, and participate in face to face meetings with prospective and current donors
- Co-ordinate academic colleagues’ contribution to the outreach activities, such as lectures and workshops.
- Collaborate with the Careers and Employability team to create a programme of activities which will support and assist forced migrants in preparing for work.
- Provide support, reports and insights to the Compass Project Working Group and other relevant College groups as required

Administration:

- Adhere to existing record keeping procedures and prepare reports on all participants of the project.
- Formalise and maintain data capture for the all of those engaged on the Compass Project – both pre and post entry
- Plan and deliver on the logistical requirements of the outreach strand of work.
- Contribute articles, event summaries and content to the Access and Engagement department newsletter and college media channels.

The above list of duties is not exhaustive and is subject to change. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties within the scope and grading of this post

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

(These are universal to all Birkbeck roles)

- To adhere to the College's Equal Opportunities policy in all activities, and to actively promote equality of opportunity wherever possible.
- To be responsible for your own health and safety and that of your colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and relevant EC directives.
- To work in accordance with Birkbeck's data protection policies, and relevant current data protection legislation.
- To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	DESIRABLE CRITERIA	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of issues and barriers facing forced migrant communities Knowledge of the legal processes and statuses for forced migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked in an outward facing role in a university setting Understanding of the widening participation agenda in a university context Office for Students guidance, institutional expectations and priorities 	<i>Application Presentation Interview</i>
Technical and/or work based skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent computing skills and Microsoft Office software Excellent use of Powerpoint software Experience of using social media to communicate and promote work Ability to design and deliver tailored workshops and face to face activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working with the public in challenging situations Experience of using Prezi 	<i>Application Presentation Interview</i>
General skills and attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent written and communication skills, including the ability to draft correspondence on behalf of the project to external organisations and partners Strong interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to work with a range of internal and external contacts, particularly individuals and community based organisations Ability to work independently and self-start in order to deliver activities, but also be able to collaborate and deliver work effectively 		<i>Application Presentation Interview</i>

- Excellent time management and organisational skills and to plan, organise and prioritise workload
- Ability to devise and implement practical solutions
- Excellent administrative skills and high attention to detail

Experience

- Proven outreach experience
- Working with forced migrant communities
- Delivering workshops and group based activities
- Establish and delivery of a mentoring/buddying scheme
- Identifying and making applications for external funding

*Application
Interview*

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level
- Working within or with HEIs
- Understanding of higher education issues desirable

Application

FURTHER INFORMATION

Salary:

Grade 6 of the College's London Pay Scale which is £33,238 rising to £37,912 per annum.

The salary quoted is on the College's London Pay Scale which includes a consolidated Weighting/Allowance which applies only to staff whose normal contractual place of work is in the Greater London area.

Hours:

35 hours per week (1.0 FTE)

Working pattern:

Monday – Friday, 9-5, occasional evening and weekend work, accruing TOIL

Probation period:

6 months

Duration of post:

24 months

BENEFITS

Birkbeck has a number of benefits which includes, but is not limited to:

- 25 days annual leave per annum, plus an additional six days when the College is closed during the spring and winter breaks. This is in addition to the eight bank holidays.
- Defined benefit pension scheme
- Flexible working
- Season ticket loan
- Study assistance scheme

The above list is not exhaustive, please visit the benefit section [here](#) for more information and a list of other benefits.

HOW TO APPLY

Closing date for applications:

Midnight, 14 April 2019

Interview date:

Thursday, 2 May 2019

As a part of the interview applicants will be expected to deliver a short presentation. Topic will be provided to shortlisted applicants.

Start date:

To be confirm following interviews

To apply for this position please go to our online [recruitment portal](#) and search for reference 317.

Please ensure your application includes full details of your employment history, education and qualifications, and recent development. For some roles, this will be collected in the application form, for others you will be asked to include this in a professional CV which can be uploaded.

All applicants are asked to provide a statement on their suitability for the role. This is a key piece of information which will help us determine your suitability for the role, so please:

- Align your skills and experience with both the job description and person specification.
- Be specific about projects you've worked on or managed. What was the outcome? How did you measure success?
- If you've had a leadership role, tell us about it. How big was the team? What was the scope of your work?
- If you're a recent graduate or have limited work experience, reference projects or coursework that demonstrate relevant skills and knowledge.
- Keep it short; the application form or the CV should contain all the additional information that we need during the selection process.

In addition to your application statement you may be asked to answer specific questions in areas that we consider essential to the role.

INFORMAL ENQUIRIES

Informal enquiries can be made to:
Caroline McDonald, Director Access and
Engagement, via email c.mcdonald@bbk.ac.uk

HELP & ASSISTANCE

If you are having difficulties accessing this site
please email jobs@bbk.ac.uk

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The College is committed to providing the highest quality academic and working environment where all staff, students, visitors and contractors are welcomed respected and treated in a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner. The College is proud of its diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. No one will be treated unfairly because of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, carer status, political belief, pregnancy/maternity, social class, gender identity or marital/civil partnership.

Birkbeck is a member of the 'positive about disability' Disability Confident scheme and guarantees to interview all candidates who meet the minimum essential criteria for the post and have chosen to opt in the scheme.

Birkbeck is a member of Advance HE, holds an institutional Bronze level Athena SWAN award, is a Mindful Employers Charter signatory and subscribes to Stonewall's Diversity Champions.